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TSPL, EINV, JM, XL

SUBJECT: JAMAICA: DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

11. The following information is keyed to reftel, paragraph 15:

A) The Jamaican Diaspora is a readily identifiable community in both North America and the U.K. The Friends of Jamaica, University of the West Indies (UWI) Alumni Association, the Government of Jamaica (GoJ)'s annual Diaspora Conference, and the recently-formed group Young Diasporans are platforms for outreach.

B) The diaspora maintains very close connections to Jamaica, including kinship networks, educational and institutional ties, one of the world's highest per capita levels of remittances, and heavy involvement in the political and cultural life of the country.

C) The diaspora community self-activates to provide substantial disaster relief in the wake of hurricanes which periodically devastate Jamaica.

D) While there is great potential for long-term diaspora community investment in Jamaica, it has not yet been fully leveraged. USAID supports a Partnership for Education and the Jamaican Educational Trust. Grace-Kennedy Corp. and Western Union, with the support of former U.S. Ambassador Susan Cobb, have implemented a successful Building Bridges project.

E) Among the diaspora community, groups of physicians, engineers, and teachers conduct outreach visits to the country. There is probably considerable scope for expansion of science diplomacy programs.

F) As far as Post is aware, the diaspora community has not become engaged in conflict resolution and peace building.

G) (not applicable)

H) A number of diasporans have returned to Jamaica and played key roles in electoral reform, institution building, and civil society development. There are numerous opportunities in these areas.

I) The GoJ gives considerable concern and attention to the diasporans, and the country's two major political parties maintain close ties to, and have affiliations in, the diaspora community. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT) has a Diaspora Desk as part of its organizational structure. The GoJ supports an annual Diaspora Conference, and recently helped organize/sponsor a group of Young Diasporans. The current Government has encouraged diasporans with certain needed experience

and skills to return to the country. Some have proposed that representatives from the diaspora community be accorded seats in the Senate, although nothing formal has been introduced.

J) Recognizing the need to leverage remittances for development work, a remittance project was formed in 2003 as part of the Building Bridges (BB) Florida-Jamaica Initiative. Building Bridges was created by former U.S. Ambassador Sue Cobb in collaboration with Jamaica's Investment and Trade Promotion Agency (JAMPRO), the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), and the American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica (AMCHAM). The program sought to strengthen links between the public and private sectors of Jamaica and Florida by enhancing and coordinating programs in areas of mutual interest. The remittance (IPLEDGE) component of the BB program included trading conglomerate Grace Kennedy and Company, Western Union, USAID, the U.S. Embassy, and an NGO with Jamaican/American ties that aims to mobilize U.S. and Jamaican public and private resources in support of primary education. The program funded the printing of mathematics and language textbooks for primary school students in grades one to three and was a natural progression of the numeracy and literacy program, to strengthen the teaching of reading and writing in schools. Primary education was chosen as the area of focus for the IPLEDGE program because it was agreed that this area would have a significant impact on the sustainable development of Jamaica. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Culture supports the IPLEDGE initiative, particularly because it ties in with their strategic objectives, which include investing in primary education. USAID and the

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diaspora community also support the Partnership for Education and the Jamaica Educational Trust.

K) Through the U.K. High Commission, the diaspora community recently sought funding for a reception to welcome delegates to the GoJ's annual Diaspora Conference (unfortunately, Post was unable to identify funding which could be used for this purpose).

L) Post has not designed or participated in public diplomacy programs customized to diaspora community needs and interests, but may do so in future.

M) A useful tool would be the PAS's Speakers Program. USAID will continue to build opportunities for diaspora collaboration and co-funding into its projects going forward. The University of the West Indies (UWI) has an active diaspora studies program with which post could cooperate.

12. Post's points of contact for diaspora follow-up will be EconOff Nathan Carter (CarterNC@state.gov) and USAID Deputy Director Sean Osner (sosner@usaid.gov).  
Parnell